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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education polled members of local school boards and administrators on their perceptions of vocational-technical education and business community participation in school programs and planning. The poll included surveys, discussions, and interviews. Two hundred eighty-three questionnaires were completed. At least 95 percent of board members and administrators supported requiring instruction in employability skills or work readiness. Only one in five board members and more than 80 percent of administrators were aware of the Illinois Tech Prep program. Most board members (62 percent) and administrators (89 percent) were familiar with efforts to integrate vocational education and academic education. Only 32 percent of board members and 66 percent of administrators reported that vocational and academic education were integrated in their schools. Sixty percent of board members had very little knowledge about the purpose or function of the regional delivery system; administrators were well informed. Survey responses reflected generally high value for the following: (1) educational participation in the business community; (2) expanded teacher certification opportunities; (3) employability skills instruction; (4) requirement for co-enrollment in remedial basics and vocational programs; and (5) business community involvement. Recommendations based on the findings were made to board members and school administrators. (Eight recommended readings and 12 suggested readings are listed.) (YLB)

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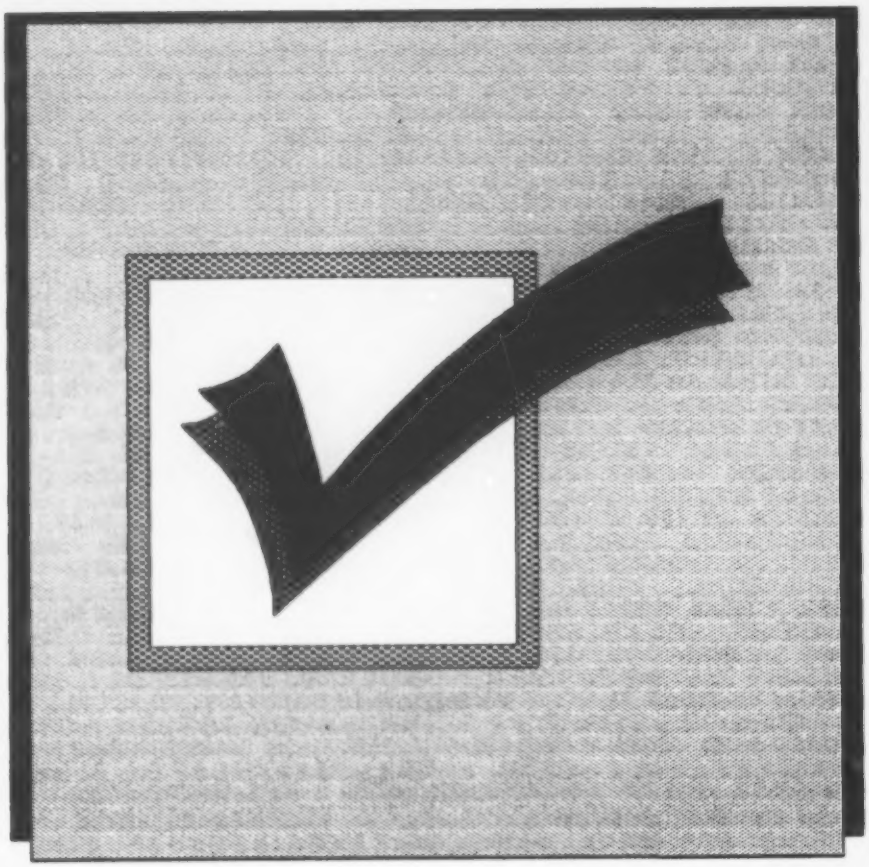
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SEEK BUSINESS COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

School Board Survey Results



Illinois Council on Vocational Education

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ICoVE's 1989-1991 REPORTS AND STUDIES

- BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS (A survey and validation report of Illinois' business, industry, and labor needs from education.)
- TOWARD A WORLD-CLASS WORKFORCE (A response to business, industry, and labor needs with recommendations to education as well as to the private sector.)
- BUILDING WORLD MARKET COMPETITORS: TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (A status report of the community college capacity to be a resource to the state's economy.)
- BUILDING WORLD MARKET COMPETITORS: TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND THE ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (A status report of the community college capacity to be a resource to the state's economy.)
- EXPANDING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS WORK-BASED TRAINING SYSTEMS IN ILLINOIS (A study to review potential expansion of apprenticeship programs, including pre-apprenticeship.)
- A FOLLOW-UP OF 1989-1991 ACTIVITIES RESPONDING TO ICoVE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT (A follow-up of ICoVE's 11 recommendations and 45 suggested actions in four Technical Reports addressing private-sector involvement issues for 1987-1988.)
- A FOLLOW-UP OF 1989-1991 ACTIVITIES RESPONDING TO ICoVE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COORDINATION (A follow-up of ICoVE's 23 recommendations and 31 suggested actions in five Technical Reports addressing coordination issues for 1987-1988.)
- A FOLLOW-UP OF 1989-1991 ACTIVITIES RESPONDING TO ICoVE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS (A follow-up of 56 recommendations and 66 suggested actions in nine Technical Reports addressing special population issues for 1987-1988.)
- A FOLLOW-UP OF 1989-1991 ACTIVITIES RESPONDING TO ICoVE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR QUALITY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (A follow-up of 35 recommendations and 124 suggested actions in 14 Technical Reports addressing quality vocational education issues for 1987-1988.)
- A FOLLOW-UP OF 1989-1991 ACTIVITIES RESPONDING TO ICoVE'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT (A follow-up of 29 recommendations and 140 suggested actions in 12 Technical Reports addressing education for employment issues in 1987-1988.)
- COMMON ELEMENTS (A report of coordination and special programs serving special populations through vocational education and job training.)
- CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION, A WAY TO STAY OUT (A report of public hearings and interviews of inmates with commendations, recommendations for Illinois with supporting statements, and success stories.)
- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SEEK BUSINESS COMMUNITY COMMITMENT (A survey report of local school board members and administrators' perceptions of tech prep and private-sector involvement with vocational education.)
- INCREASING THE IMPACT OF ICoVE RECOMMENDATIONS: EXAMPLES FROM JTPA REPORTS (A self-evaluation report of ICoVE)
- SPECIAL POPULATION STUDENTS: THE ISSUE OF ACCESS AND SERVICES (A guide for local councils)
- OVERVIEW OF ICoVE INITIATIVES, FISCAL YEARS 1989 AND 1990 (A report of ICoVE activities including major initiatives, council meetings, council linkages, reports, and other activities.)
- ILLINOIS TECHNICAL COMMITTEES, 1985-1990 (A report of the State's technical committee activities and accomplishments.)
- NEWSLINE (A newsletter prepared four times per year.)
- MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SEEK BUSINESS COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

School Board Survey Results

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS' ANNUAL CONVENTION
Chicago, Illinois
November 16-17, 1990

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

State Board member Denene Wilmeth completes questionnaire as Mary Beth Stine, ICoVE member, and Carol McGee, assistant executive director, watch.

The Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICoVE) polled members of local school boards, administrators, spouses, and guests attending the annual convention for Illinois' local school board members in November 1990. Respondents' perceptions of vocational-technical education and business community participation in school programs and planning was the theme. The poll included surveys, discussions, and interviews conducted in the Council's exhibit booth. Two hundred eighty-three questionnaires were completed: 64% by school board members; 20% by administrators; and the remaining 16% by spouses, guests, and teachers, designated as "others."

INTRODUCTION

ICoVE's statewide study in 1990, ***BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS*** (ICoVE partnerships study), determined Illinois' business and labor perspectives on what vocational education can do to prepare the Illinois workforce with the skills necessary for the 1990s and beyond. The mail survey was followed by eight roundtable discussions throughout the state.

BASIC SKILLS BACKED. Illinois' businesses and labor representatives said that improving students' preparation in basic academic skills--reading, writing, and math--should be the top priority for education. Meeting basic skills was viewed as the responsibility of all of education with no distinction between education and vocational education. About 73 percent of the businesses and fully 80 percent of the labor representatives ranked it first or second--far above all other goals in the survey.

The ICoVE partnerships study and others reveal that the modern workplace needs employees with stronger basic skills as well as advanced academics and technical training. Skills that employers consider fundamental for workforce preparation are basic academic, communication, employment readiness, cognitive, interpersonal, personal, keyboarding and computer literacy, and leadership skills, as well as knowledge of technological systems.

Accordingly, the school board convention survey sought opinions about instruction in the basic reading, writing, and computation skills and some of the additional basic workplace skills encompassed in the term "employability skills." In agreement with the business community, at least 95 percent of the responding board members and administrators support the practice of requiring instruction in employability skills or work readiness, and most assign a high degree of importance to the practice.

BOARD MEMBERS GENERALLY WELL INFORMED. Half of the survey questions addressed awareness of issues or practices. Board members seem to be well informed, except in two categories: Education for Employment regional delivery system (RDS) activities and the Tech Prep initiative being started this year.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey posed these questions:

- Are you aware of the Tech Prep initiative being started this year?
- Are you aware of efforts being made to integrate vocational education and academic education? Is your school doing this?
- How well are you kept apprised of activities in the regional delivery system (RDS) for vocational education?
- Rate the value of administrators, vocational educators, counselors, secondary academic teachers, and elementary teachers participating in an internship in the business community every 3-5 years.
- Is there merit to expanding teacher certification to include a "specialist in residence" for highly skilled community members in the classroom on a part-time basis?
- Do you think all students should receive instruction in "employability skills" or "work readiness" (i.e., work attitude, "how a business operates," teamwork, interpersonal relationships, getting along on the job, self-esteem) as part of their secondary education? If so, how important is it?
- Does your school offer instruction in "employability skills? If so, as a course or infused or integrated in other classes?
- Should Illinois develop a standardized "work readiness" test for all secondary students, such as the ACT or SAT?
- To what extent do you agree with two methods of ensuring that students have mastered the academic basics--enrollment in basics only and co-enrollment in remedial basics?
- Do advisory councils report to your school board?
- Are representatives of the business community actively involved with your school programs? To what extent at the elementary, junior high, secondary academic, secondary vocational education, and other levels?
- How important is involving the business community in the following activities:
  - identifying reading standards,
  - practicing job interviews with students,
  - demonstrating trade skills,
  - providing hands-on experiences in their places of business,
  - speakers' bureau,
  - team teaching,
  - advisory councils for vocational education programs,
  - identifying math standards,
  - talking with students about what they expect from employment,
  - helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of academic subject matter (math, English, science),
  - career days,
  - advisory councils for academic programs?

  Is the business community currently involved in these?

Illinois Tech Prep represents an educational program that integrates rigorous academic and technical skill development, emphasizes applications, and stresses employability development within an occupational field. It is a planned sequence of courses, both academic and technical, that begins at 9th grade and is articulated with a postsecondary experience leading to an associate degree or, in some programs, an apprenticeship or a four-year baccalaureate degree. This sequence can be either continuous or interspersed

with work experience. Robert Leininger, state superintendent of education, avows that Tech Prep is one of the State Board's highest priorities and affirms that state funds will be available for Tech Prep.

Only one in five board members is aware of the Illinois Tech Prep program. Assistant Superintendent Richard Miguel feels that this is not a surprising figure though, "considering that Tech Prep planning has just begun. We would expect it to more than double by next year." Awareness of the Illinois Tech Prep program among administrators is very high. More than 80 percent of the responding administrators know about the plan. Dr. Miguel recognized that there was widespread support among administrators for Tech Prep, but was surprised that the awareness level had already reached this point. He indicated that "this is a very good sign for the future of vocational-technical education."

Most responding board members (62 percent) and administrators (89 percent) are familiar with efforts to integrate vocational education and academics education. However, only 32 percent of the board members and 66 percent of the administrators report that vocational and academics education are integrated in their schools.

The majority (60 percent) of the responding board members have very little knowledge about the purpose or function of the regional delivery system (RDS). As expected, administrators are well informed.

Survey responses reflect generally high value for educator participation in the business community. Board members and administrators agree that priority ranking of internships is highest for vocational educators followed by counselors, secondary academic teachers, administrators, and elementary teachers.

The preponderance of respondents believe in the merit of expanded teacher certification opportunities. Board members and administrators support flexibility in certification of instructors at levels from 80 to 100 percent. The report cites examples (from Illinois and other states) of some means for allowing community specialists to teach in secondary schools.

Education is very much in accord with business concerning the importance of employability skills instruction. At least 95 percent of the responding board members and administrators believe that all students should receive instruction in employability skills and work readiness and rate the practice very high in importance.

Both board members and administrators report that employability skills instruction is offered in their schools, usually infused or integrated in other classes. Of the board members, 44 percent report the presence of employability skills instruction; 42 percent say it is not offered. Administrators note employability skills instruction is offered in almost three-fourths of their schools.

The related idea of developing a standardized "work readiness" test for Illinois' secondary students is supported by a little more than half of both board members and administrators. The report describes several efforts under way to establish valid, reliable measures of workplace skills.

Most convention survey respondents believe that the preferable way to ensure that students have mastered the academic basics is to require co-enrollment in remedial

basics and vocational programs. Of the 43 percent who registered mid-level agreement with the co-enrollment method, 44 percent are board members and 47 percent are administrators.

Advisory councils report to school boards in about half of the districts represented. Interviews revealed that elementary schools use parent-teacher organizations and associations in advisory capacities.

About 56 percent of the responding board members and 64 percent of the administrators report business community involvement in their school programs. The involvement is reported highest in secondary vocational education, followed in order by secondary academic programs, junior high schools, and elementary schools. Board member and administrator responses are very similar concerning the extent of business community involvement for specified educational levels. The involvement is perceived as somewhat high for both academic and vocational education at the secondary level.

Respondents highly value business community involvement in the 12 specified activities. The highest percentage of respondents rank business involvement important or very important (ratings 4 or 5) for every activity except "identifying reading standards," which is rated moderately important overall. Surprisingly, both board members and administrators attach significant importance to the involvement of the business community in advisory councils for academic programs.

Most respondents perceive the business community as actually involved in only three activities: talking with students about what they expect from employment, providing hands-on experiences in their places of business, and participating in career days. Unlike board members and other respondents, administrators perceive business community involvement in an additional three activities: job interview practice with students, speakers' bureau, and advisory councils for vocational education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS
To Board Members and School Administrators

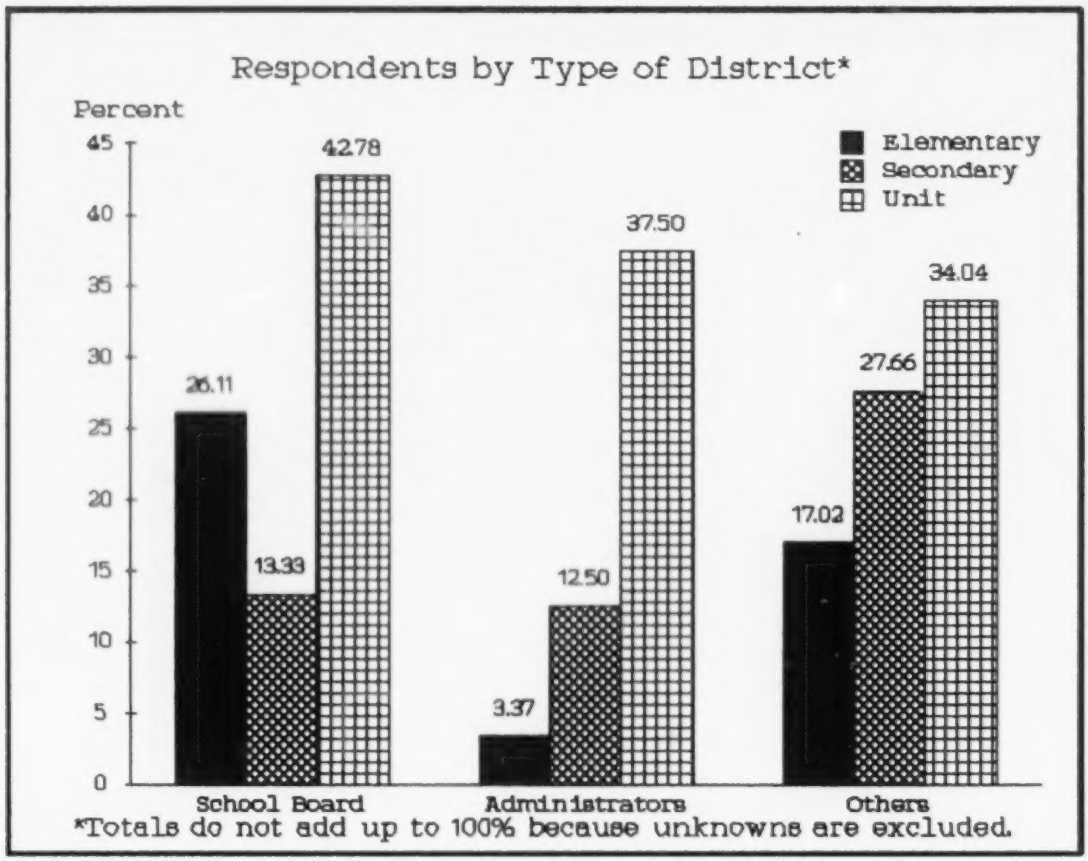
- Become better informed about Tech Prep and encourage your secondary schools to participate in a Tech Prep planning project.
- Establish policies and practices that institutionalize and ensure the integration of academic and vocational-technical education.
- Ask administrators of the Education for Employment Regional Delivery System to report their activities on a regular basis.
- Make provisions and acquire resources to support internships with the business community for secondary academic and vocational teachers, counselors, administrators, and other educators.
- Identify a "talent pool" in your community and encourage this talent to apply for provisional teaching certificates and other options for sharing their knowledge and skills with students.
- Get the business community and educators' commitment to a common core of employability skills that should be taught by the entire school system.

- Develop a plan for systematically teaching and reinforcing employability skills.
- Develop or adopt a work readiness, employability skills assessment program.
- Identify all secondary students' who have not mastered basic academic skills and require an individual education plan that provides for their mastery of those skills.
- Establish business advisory councils based on a partnership concept to provide substantive involvement of the private sector in educational planning and implementation.
- Establish intensive, meaningful partnerships with business and industry.

Assistant State Supt. Dr. Richard Miguel and ICoVE Member Hartzel Black discuss survey results. L to R: Mrs. Laurian Miguel, Assistant Executive Director Carol McGee, Hartzel Black, Dr. Miguel.

INTRODUCTION

For the third year, the Illinois Council on Vocational Education (ICoVE) polled members of local school boards, administrators, spouses, and guests attending the annual convention for local school board members. Respondents' perceptions of vocational-technical education and business community participation in school programs and planning was the theme. The poll included surveys, discussions, and interviews conducted in the Council's exhibit booth.



Two hundred eighty-three questionnaires were completed: 64% by school board members; 20% by administrators; and the remaining 16% by spouses, guests, and teachers (shown as "others").

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE SURVEY

ICoVE's statewide study in 1990, ***BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS*** (ICoVE partnerships study), determined Illinois business and labor perspectives on what vocational education can do to prepare the Illinois workforce with the skills necessary for the 1990s and beyond. The mail survey of businesses and labor representatives was followed by eight roundtable discussions throughout the state.

BASIC SKILLS BACKED. Illinois businesses and labor representatives said that improving students' preparation in basic academic skills--reading, writing, and math--should be the top priority for education. Business and labor participants made no distinction between education and vocational education. Rather, meeting basic skills was viewed as the responsibility of all of education. About 73% of the businesses and fully 80% of the labor representatives ranked it first or second--far above all other goals in the survey.

ICoVE member M. Stine encourages a school administrator to complete the questionnaire.

The ICoVE partnerships study and others reveal that the modern workplace needs employees with stronger basic skills as well as advanced academics and technical training. Skills that employers consider fundamental for workforce preparation are basic academic skills, communication skills, employment readiness skills, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, personal skills, keyboarding and computer literacy skills, knowledge of technological systems, and leadership skills.

Accordingly, the school board convention survey sought opinions about instruction in the basic reading, writing, and computation skills and some of the additional basic workplace skills encompassed in the term "employability skills." In agreement with the business community, at least 95 percent of the responding board members and administrators support the practice of requiring instruction in employability skills or work readiness, and most assign a high degree of importance to the practice.

In addition, employability skills instruction, usually infused or integrated into other classes, is offered in a majority of unit and secondary school districts represented in the survey. The related issue of using a standardized "work readiness" test also garnered the support of board members and administrators, but to a lesser degree than providing employability skills instruction.

VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMICS EDUCATION INTEGRATED. The interest shown last year in integrating academic and vocational courses proved to be a catalyst to action. Two-thirds of the

administrators and one-third of the board members responding to this year's poll reported evidence of the integration of vocational and academics education in their schools.

BOARD MEMBERS GENERALLY WELL INFORMED. Half of the survey questions addressed awareness of issues or practices. Board members seem to be well informed, except in two categories: Education for Employment regional delivery system (RDS) activities and the Tech Prep initiative being started this year.

Greater than 80% of board members polled know whether or not their schools offer instruction in employability skills. Similarly, about 63% of respondents are aware of efforts being made to integrate vocational education and academics education, although about 25 percent do not know whether or not their particular schools are integrating them. Conversely, most board members said they do not know about Education for Employment regional delivery systems (RDS) or their activities, and fewer than one-fifth of them know about the Tech Prep initiative being started this year.

Board members are cognizant of business community involvement in their schools' programs. More than 80% of respondents know the level of business community activity in their schools. All know whether or not the business community is involved in 15 specified activities.

TECH PREP AWARENESS

QUESTION ONE	Are you aware of the Tech Prep initiative being started this year? Yes ____ No ____

Awareness by school board members of the Illinois Tech Prep program is low--only one in five board members is aware of it. Awareness is greatest in secondary districts at 30 percent and lowest in elementary districts at 15 percent. Awareness among unit district board members is about 20 percent. Lowest board member awareness reported is among the central districts of the state. According to Assistant Superintendent Richard Miguel, "Considering that Tech Prep planning has just begun, this is not a surprising figure. We would expect it to more than double by next year."

Awareness of the Illinois Tech Prep program among administrators, on the other hand, is very high. More than 80 percent of the administrators statewide, primarily from unit districts, know about the plan. Interestingly, central district administrators (87 percent) seem to be the most aware. Dr. Miguel recognized that there was widespread support among administrators for Tech Prep, but was surprised that the awareness level had already reached this level. He indicated that "this is a very good sign for the future of vocational-technical education."

Tech Prep in Illinois

Robert Leininger, state superintendent of education, avows that Tech Prep is one of the state board's highest priorities. Further, he affirms that state funds will be available for Tech Prep. The state board has already issued 18 grants to regional secondary systems and community colleges working as partners to plan Tech Prep.

Illinois Tech Prep represents an educational program that integrates rigorous academic and technical skill development, emphasizes applications, and stresses employability development within an occupational field. It is a planned sequence of courses, both academic and technical, that begins at 9th grade and is articulated with a postsecondary experience leading to an associate degree or, in some programs, an apprenticeship or a four-year baccalaureate degree. This sequence can be either continuous or interspersed with work experience. Dr. Miguel stresses, "Tech Prep provides high-quality preparation for entry into the workforce beginning with the completion of the high school portion of Tech Prep. In this way students can alternate between education and work providing the most appropriate mix for their individual needs."

INTEGRATING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ACADEMICS

QUESTION TWO	Are you aware of efforts being made to integrate vocational education and academics education? Yes ____ No ____ Is your school doing this? Yes ____ No ____ Don't know ____

Most responding board members (62%) and administrators (89%) are familiar with efforts to integrate vocational education and academics education. However, only 32% of the board members and 66% of the administrators report that vocational and academics education are integrated in their schools. Of the board members responding, 24% report not knowing about integrated vocational and academics education in their schools. Last year participants voiced strong support for application of academic knowledge and skills and development of good work habits. Survey findings, however, suggest that applied academics and good work habit development are not sufficiently instituted.

The skills demanded by modern business and industry present an enormous challenge for education. The workplace demands a labor force that possesses not only advanced technical skills, but also strong academic skills and interpersonal skills and a willingness to continue to learn. A task this formidable cannot be accomplished by vocational-technical educators or academic educators working in isolation from each other and from business.

The ICoVE partnerships study sought information about the support among businesses and labor representatives for stronger academic requirements in high schools and stronger linkages between secondary and postsecondary programs. Tech Prep integrates advanced academic skills and years in community colleges. Business and labor representatives definitely agreed that students should meet strong academic requirements to graduate from high school vocational programs. Roundtable participants emphasized that almost all jobs in the modern technical training four-year programs that include two years in high school with stronger academic requirements and two years in the workplace require advanced academic skills, especially in mathematics and science. Their recommendation was that vocational programs should integrate advanced academic and technical training through workplace applications that reinforce and enhance problem-solving skills. Dr. Miguel agrees, stating, "This practice would facilitate implementation of the Tech Prep program in Illinois."

A school board member completes questionnaire.

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KNOWLEDGE OF REGIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS

QUESTION THREE	How well are you kept apprised of activities in the regional delivery system (RDS) for vocational education? Scale: Don't know what an RDS is 1-2-3-4-5 Very well informed

Only about 15% of board members responding say they are well or very well informed; the majority (60%) have very little knowledge about the purpose or function of the regional delivery system (RDS).

As expected, administrators are well informed about the regional delivery system. Nearly 70% report that they are very well or well informed about activities in the RDS. Only about 15% are not familiar with the RDS or have very limited knowledge of RDS activities.

The fact that the large majority of board members (60%) and spouses and "others" (69%) know little or nothing about the regional delivery systems suggests that the RDSs must do much more to inform the public of their services and activities.

INTERNSHIPS FOR EDUCATORS

QUESTION FOUR	Rate the value of the educators listed below participating in an internship in the business community every 3-5 years. Academic Teachers (secondary) Vocational Educators Elementary Teachers Counselors Administrators Scale: Low 1-2-3-4-5 High

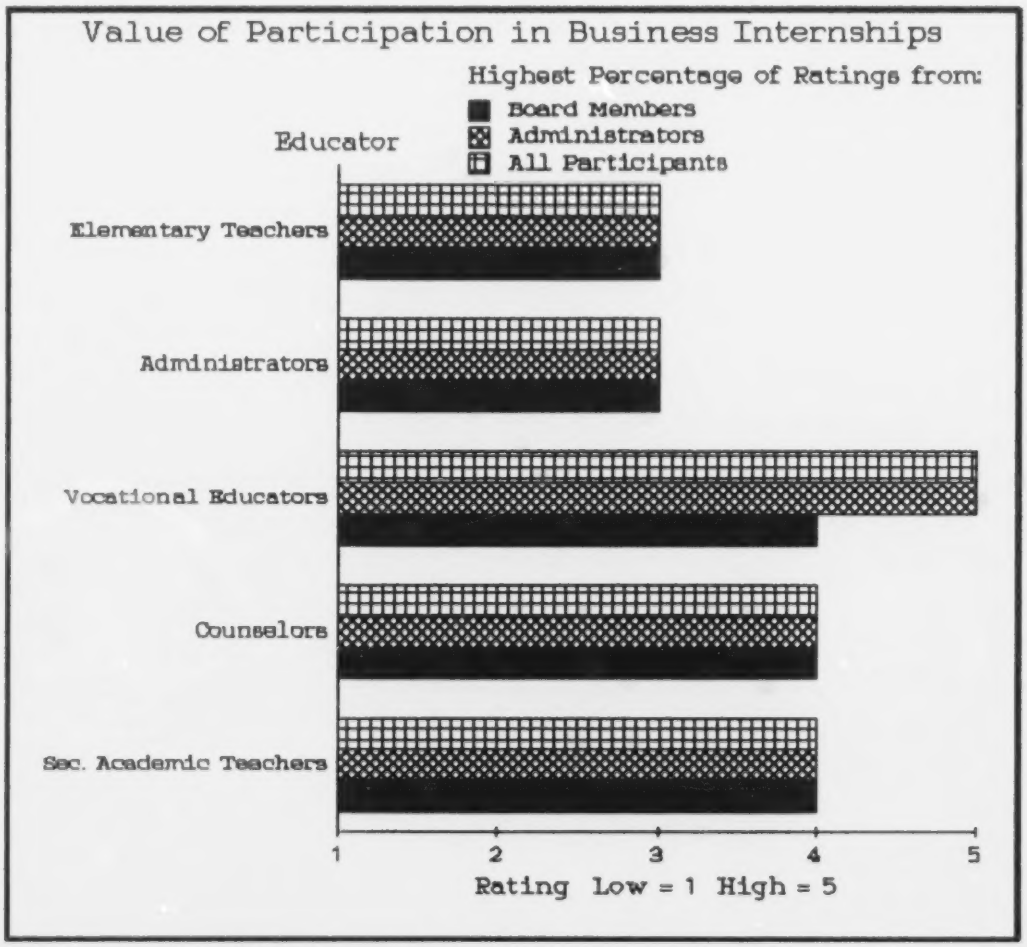
Understanding each other's mission is vital to building successful education-business partnerships. Knowing what each entity can do to help the other succeed is essential. One means of acquiring this and other essential knowledge is through educator participation in business internships. Whereas administrators value internships with business slightly more than board members do, survey responses generally reflect high value for educator participation in the business community. With the exception of internships for administrators, board members and administrators agree that priority ranking of internships is highest for vocational educators followed by counselors, secondary academic teachers, and elementary teachers. School board members rate administrators' internships as the second highest priority, whereas administrators rate them fourth for themselves.

Vocational educators are required to have experience in the workplace in order to be certified. To keep up to date, they must continue to have contact with the business community. The survey underscores this with over 69% of board members and 78% of administrators placing a moderately high or the highest value on internships for vocational educators. Only 16% of board members and 7% of administrators rate it a low value.

Administrator participation in business community partnerships is crucial in acquiring the understanding required for building education-business partnerships. Board members

consider administrators to be the second highest priority group for internships. Although board members and administrators rate the value of administrator internships moderately important, 3.4 on the 5-point scale, divergent opinions exist. A large proportion of board members (48%) highly value them and rank administrator internships second. However, 19% of board members and 18% of administrators give them a low value and rank them fourth.

Counselor participation in community business internships can endow them with enhanced understanding of the multiplicity of options and the implications of pursuing each option, thus helping them to provide the recommended counseling. Roundtable participants in the ICoVE partnerships study urge that students be encouraged through career counseling to explore many options of formal education, employment, and job training. Further, they recommend that comprehensive career counseling be provided to all students before they enter high school. The counseling recommended, therefore, involves elementary middle school, and junior high counselors, as well as high school counselors. Overall, school board members and administrators rate counselor participation in business community internships essentially the same as they value secondary academic teacher participation--moderately high. About 25% of board members and 15% of administrators place a low value on counselor participation.



*Highest percentage of response from each group.

secondary academic teacher participation in business community internships is a must if Tech Prep is to be successful. Additionally, internship participation helps secondary academic teachers know how to apply academic skills. Survey respondents seem to support this contention. Overall, board members and administrators rate academic teacher participation moderately high. About 25% of school board members and 17% of administrators, however, assign it a low priority. Apparently many persons still believe that an academic teacher's place is in the school. "Increasingly, businesses are indicating that students need not only academic skills but also the ability to apply them in the workplace. What better way can academic teachers learn this but from first-hand experiences in the business community," urges Dr. Miguel.

The participation of elementary teachers in business internships strengthens their teaching of career awareness. Through such participation, they can gain insight into the direct relation of the skills, attitudes, and work habits they try to instill in their students to jobs in business and industry. Although many respondents see value in elementary teachers having internships in the business community, this overall rating is the lowest of all groups, or about 2.8 on the 5 point scale.

SPECIALISTS IN RESIDENCE

QUESTION FIVE	Is there merit to expanding teacher certification to include a "specialist in residence" for highly skilled community members in the classroom on a part-time basis? Examples: journeyman electrician, artist, physician, etc., to teach a class for 6-10 weeks. Yes ___ No ___

The preponderance of respondents believe in the merit of expanded teacher certification opportunities. Board members and administrators support the idea at levels from 80 to 100 percent. One board member, however, did question the optimal length of time.

To ensure that the candidate is up-to-date in relevant skills and remains so, expanded certification should include a requirement of recent work experience. About 61% of businesses and 4% of labor representatives in the ICoVE partnerships study support teacher training and certification based on current industry skill standards. More than 40% of both groups in the study support the requirement that all vocational teachers have current work experience related to their technical fields.

One means of bringing certified vocational instructors up-to-date is by pairing them with qualified people from the private sector to team teach. Private-sector team teachers can establish role-model and mentoring relationships with students, set up classroom exercises in the workplace to demonstrate to students the relevance of their academic technical training to employment, and bring real-world industry problems and applications into the vocational classroom.

Currently in Illinois, persons with particular expertise and experience may teach in the public schools under either a provisional vocational certificate or a temporary provisional vocational certificate. Indeed this is a widespread practice in the state. A stipulation for issuance of the temporary provisional certificate is that no qualified, certified teacher be available. The candidate for a provisional certificate must have 60 semester hours of college credit in any area and 2,000 hours of work experience in the field under consideration. For a temporary certificate, no college credit is required, but 8,000 hours of prior work experience are necessary; 3 semester hours are required prior to renewal.

Requests to other states for disclosure of certification requirements of community specialists yielded identification of some means for allowing such persons to teach in secondary schools.

- Michigan aims to admit people with unique specialties into the regular educational arena and has an annual authorization for persons with business and industry skills but no educational certification. This is tenuous because the holder can be replaced when a certified teacher with similar skills is available. Michigan state education department representative Gertrude Bonaparte admonishes that teaching provisions for persons with unique expertise should be long-term to allow time for regular staff to acquire skill in the area.

- Iowa does not require part-time resource persons to be credentialed, but licensure is required for full-time teaching. Applicants for a provisional occupational secondary certificate must complete initial requirements that include demonstration of competency in both teaching and the occupational area to be taught. Renewal requires continual, specified progress toward completion of the required studies. Significantly, the occupational experience required must be recent and relevant.

- New Jersey has joined the teacher certification revision movement. A state board of education proposal would require vocational teachers to meet specific standards for work experience and education and teach for a year under provisional certificates before earning permanent licenses. This practice would eliminate emergency certification for teachers of vocational trades and occupations. Provisional certificated teachers then would have to undergo the teacher training program required of all provisional teachers.

- Utah also offers a provisional vocational-technical certificate for persons who teach at the secondary level. The occupational experience required for this certification also is restricted to more recent years.

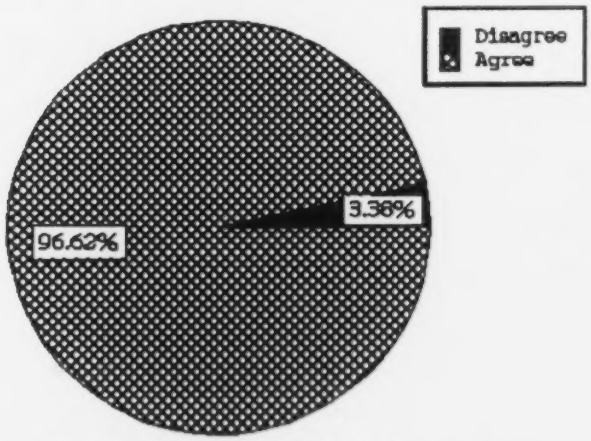
- Virginia requires a school division to request a provisional certificate for a high school graduate who has six years of work experience in a given area and to whom it has made a commitment to employ. Although the certificate is nonrenewable, the school division may request a new certificate for the same individual each year for 5 years. Continuation requires commitment to the vocational certification process and satisfaction of additional requirements.

- Pennsylvania has a rule that entitles adjunct instructors to teach for 600 hours without certification.

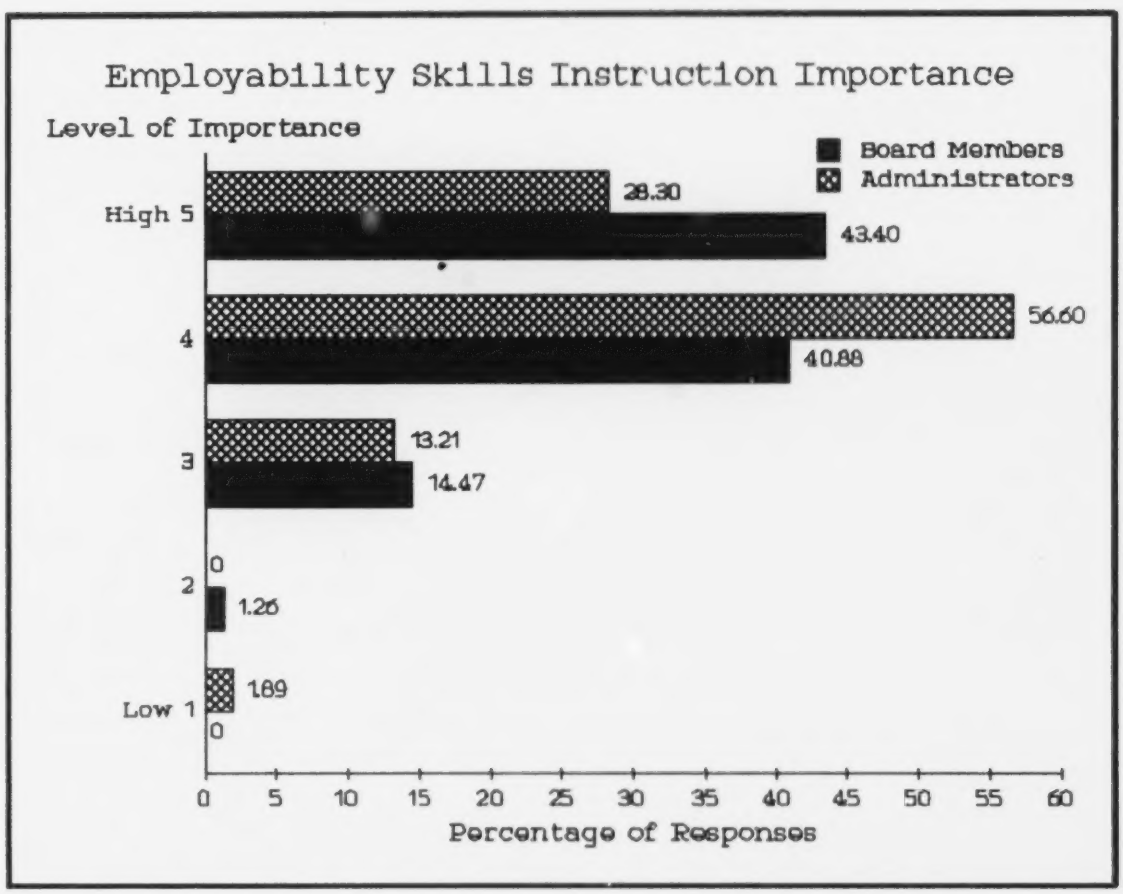
INSTRUCTION IN EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND WORK READINESS

QUESTION SIX	Do you think all students should receive instruction in "employability skills" or "work readiness" (i.e., work attitude, "how a business operates," teamwork, interpersonal relationships, getting along on the job, self-esteem) as part of their secondary education? Yes ___ No ___ If so, how important is it? Scale: Not very important 1-2-3-4-5 Very Important

Employability Skills Instruction
For All Secondary Education Students



Composite of Board Members and Administrators responses



Education is very much in accord with business concerning the necessity of employability skills instruction. More than 95% of the responding board members and administrators believe that all students should receive instruction in employability skills and work readiness.

The high level of support for providing employability skills is consistent with the importance respondents assign to the practice. The highest percentage of board members and others rate it very important. One board member differentiates between the moderately important rating for college-bound students, and the very important rating for students bound for the work world. Another contends that providing instruction in employability skills is not the school's job.

The highest percentage of administrator responses is between the moderately important and very important ratings. One administrator reports another tack taken to ensure student employability: "Our district has recently employed a community resource coordinator for the purpose of working with community business representatives so that students can be better prepared for the business world."

The ICoVE partnerships study results disclose that Illinois businesses and labor representatives believe that the top priority for education should be improving students' preparation in basic academic and employability skills. They view this as the responsibility of all of education, with no distinction between education and vocational education.

Results of the ICoVE partnerships study and studies by the National Center on Education and the Economy, Hudson Institute, Office of Technology Assessment, and the American Society of Training and Development/U.S. Department of Labor indicate that employers want workers with a good knowledge of a wide range of skills. Skill in only a narrow area of expertise no longer will suffice. To succeed in the marketplace, employers must engage in business strategies that require adaptive and innovative employees with strong interpersonal skills. The basic workplace skills that employers want in their employees are the following:

- basic academic skills: reading, writing, and computation
- communication skills: speaking and listening
- cognitive skills: critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving
- personal management: self-esteem, goal setting, and personal and career development
- interpersonal skills: negotiation, group, and teamwork
- leadership skills: organizational effectiveness and leadership
- technical skills: keyboarding and computer literacy, knowledge of technological systems (e.g., biotechnology, communications systems, physical technology)
- employment readiness skills: attitudes toward work and knowledge of business operations

Dr. Miguel states that "hiring employees with these skills is cost-effective because it enables employers to engage in the business strategies that help ensure success." When employers cannot hire productive workers, they must train employees in basic workplace skills. Clearly, employers feel that students should receive instruction in these employability skills.

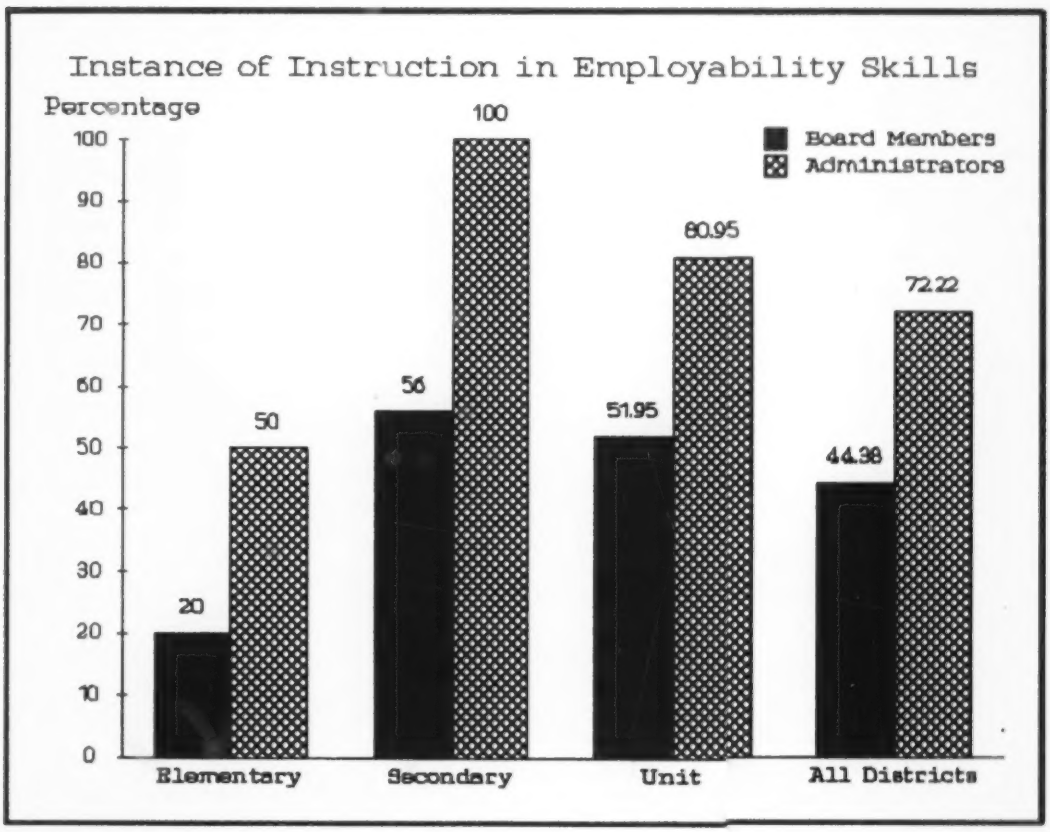
ICoVE partnerships study results indicate that Illinois businesses and labor representatives support all of the identified skills as necessary for the modern workplace.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OFFERED IN SCHOOLS

QUESTION SEVEN	Does your school offer instruction in "employability skills?" Yes ____ No ____ Don't know ____ If yes: As a course? Yes ____ No ____ Or infused/integrated in other classes ____

Employers deem employability skills instruction essential. Survey results suggest that educational practice in Illinois is responsive to employer needs. Employability skills instruction is offered in a slightly higher percentage of the schools of board members than not: 44% as opposed to 42%. Administrators note that employability skills instruction is offered in almost three-fourths of their schools, in contrast to the lack of such instruction in almost one-fourth of their schools.

Although reportedly offered most in secondary districts, followed closely by unit districts, employability skills instruction also occurs in elementary districts. One-fifth of reporting elementary district board members and half of the elementary district administrators report that employability skills instruction is offered in their schools.



Development of many workplace skills begins early and is indisputably within the province of the elementary school. Completing work on time, producing quality work, understanding and getting along with others, solving problems, thinking critically, working in a team or group, communicating and listening effectively, maintaining self-esteem and motivation, following a schedule or time line, and learning how to learn are integral parts of a kindergarten program. Further development and enrichment continue throughout the school years. Promoting students on the basis of demonstrated competencies, rather than on attendance alone, enhances the internalization of good work attitudes during the elementary years.

According to both school board members and administrators, employability skills instruction usually is infused or integrated in other classes. The instance of employability skills instruction as a separate course is only 23-30 percent.

Board member and administrator support for employability skills instruction and the fact that this instruction is recognized in a majority of the unit and secondary school districts represented are significant underpinnings of the educational system for work readiness.

STANDARDIZED WORK READINESS TEST

QUESTION EIGHT	Should Illinois develop a standardized "work readiness" test for all secondary students, such as the ACT, SAT? Yes ____ No ____ No opinion ____

A little more than half of both board members and administrators feel that Illinois should develop such a test. Such is the situation for unit districts. Interestingly, the highest percentages of affirmative responses are among board members from elementary districts and administrators from secondary districts. More than 25% of the board member respondents, however, have no opinion, as do 15% of the administrator respondents. A board member in favor of the idea says, "Good idea, but enough testing already." One dissenting administrator comments, "No more testing!" Clearly, some consideration must be given to the amount of testing employed.

Nevertheless, most respondents support development of a work readiness test. Several efforts are under way to establish valid, reliable measures of workplace skills. The Illinois State Board of Education along with a committee of practitioners will be developing performance standards and measurement procedures for a number of skill areas including employability skills and work readiness.

Alan Melchior, of the Brandeis University Center for Human Resources, states that job training people are struggling with the issue of evaluating work readiness skills. Most have adopted traditional measures such as the Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE), the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE), the California Achievement Test (CAT), and the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT) as the bases for their assessments. The California State Department of Education and a consortium of 45 agencies have developed the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) that includes tests of basic skills, functional skills, and work-oriented skills. Interview checklists of work maturity have been developed for the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which is moving toward assessing skills acquisition--not placement--to measure achievement.

Assessment is becoming a one-on-one process that is more performance-based. The portfolio or passport approach suits this type of assessment better than the paper-and-pencil test. The format should include clear guidelines for supervisor evaluations.

The JTPA reference in the Perkins Act of 1990 is aimed at coordinating with welfare and defining basic employability skills, competencies, and performance outcomes that connect with JTPA.

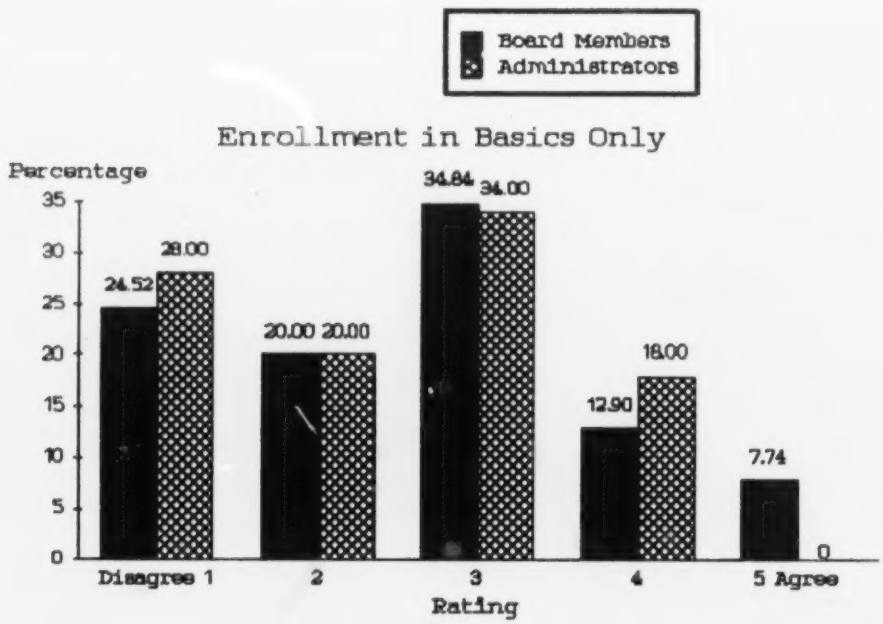
Service delivery areas in Los Angeles, Nebraska, Kansas, Oregon, Washington, Connecticut, and Michigan are participating in the Project of the States, an effort to develop a system of assessment using CASAS materials. Employers specify local labor market needs for which training and criterion-referenced measures are then determined. Because it is based on item response theory, CASAS can be customized to facilitate the assembling of a test to match the skills to be evaluated. A white paper on the 4-year-old program is available from the Center for Remediation Design in Washington, DC.

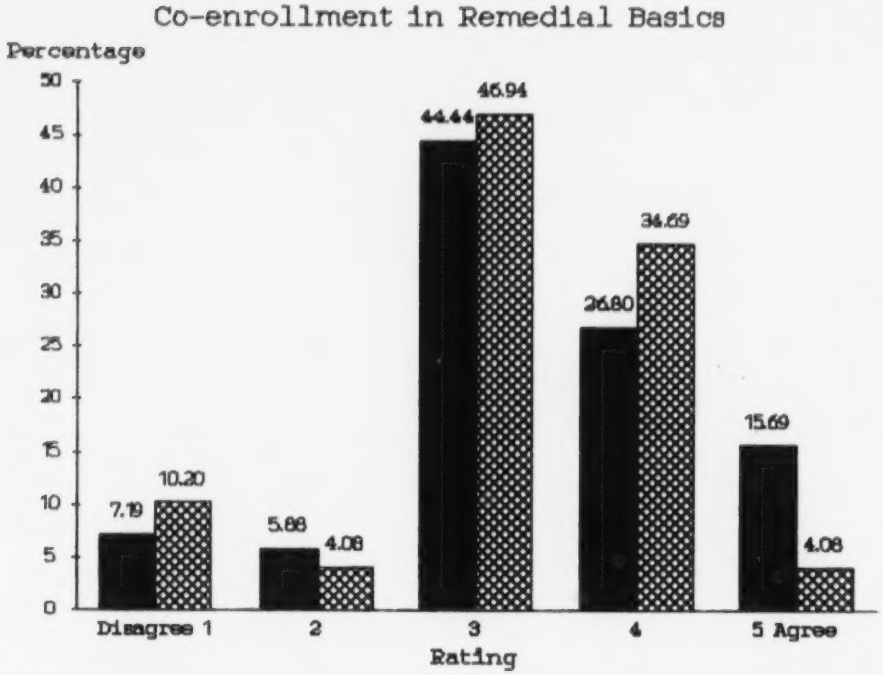
The Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT) and the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD) are engaged in a joint venture with Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop a school record that business will use. The Technology Basics Examinations (TBE) program centers on a basic core of applied academics courses. The ETS-designed examination for these courses combines multiple-choice and open-ended questions and includes simulations and hands-on exercises. Student test results are reported by levels of performance and will be highlighted in WORKLINK--an assessment and record system linking schools with employers. WORKLINK is currently being pilot-tested in Tampa, Florida, with a second pilot test planned in Indianapolis. A document summarizing the field test of core course materials will be released in February 1991.

In another collaborative effort, American College Testing (ACT), the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), state education agencies, and leaders in business are developing a service to provide a connection between skills needed in the workplace and educational preparation. Work Keys, to be used with students in high schools, postsecondary institutions, and on-the-job training programs, has three program components: job profiling, assessment of individuals, and development of curriculum and instruction. National criteria will be established for evaluating each skill according to competency level. Work Keys will be arrayed in a two-dimensional matrix that describes enabling or generic skills, both basic academic and personal, in terms meaningful to employers. Dale Parnell, president of AACJC, avows that Work Keys will be "a major asset in the development of Tech Prep . . . curricula involving joint programs between high schools and community colleges."

Michigan educators are developing a process for assessing workforce readiness, taking learning processes into consideration. They have added career development skills to the personal skills area and coordinated the management of skill development with guidance. Many workplace skills are attitudinal. Based on nonverbal communication, those attitudinal skills come from the home and are translated through school tasks. Understanding the reason for having the skills facilitates internalization. Recommendations for remediation or enrichment in skill areas are based on the extent of internalization. Although no product is yet available, reports on the development process are available from the ICoVE office.

Many of the desired work readiness skills are assessed in measures of employability designed for mentally handicapped students. An Ohio indicator is a matrix of


Board Members
Administrators
Enrollment in Basics Only
Percentage
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
24.52
28.00
20.00
20.00
34.84
34.00
12.90
18.00
7.74
0
Disagree 1
2
3
4
5 Agree
Rating


Co-enrollment in Remedial Basics
Percentage
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
7.19
10.20
5.88
4.08
44.44
46.94
26.80
34.69
15.69
4.08
Disagree 1
2
3
4
5 Agree
Rating

characteristics of self-help skills, work habits, task-related skills, work quantity, work quality, relations with supervisor, relations with peers, and work attitudes. Three descriptive phrases are provided for each characteristic. Stated in behavioral terms, the phrases can be rated on a scale of frequency of occurrence.

BASICS VERSUS REMEDIAL BASICS

QUESTION NINE	Employers told ICoVE that "basics" should be #1 priority. They suggested students should not be permitted to enroll in courses such as vocational education, music, art, etc., until they have mastered the basics. To what extent do you agree with the following ways of accomplishing this? Permit enrollment in basics only Scale: Disagree 1-2-3-4-5 Agree Require co-enrollment in remedial basics Scale: Disagree 1-2-3-4-5 Agree

Roundtable participants in the ICoVE partnerships study believe that basic academic skills--reading, writing, and mathematics--must have top priority in all primary and secondary programs, but they should be the major responsibility of kindergarten through eighth grade. They believe that these skills are the foundation for all subsequent learning, critical for success in secondary and postsecondary education as well as on the job. The participants contend that students must master basic academic skills before they enter vocational programs.

Most convention survey respondents believe that the preferable way to ensure that students have mastered the academic basics is to require co-enrollment in remedial basics and vocational programs. The 43% who register mid-level agreement with the co-enrollment method include 44% of the board member respondents and 47% of the administrator respondents. Respondents in the "other" category agree more strongly with the co-enrollment requirement. Although the overall percentages are higher for co-enrollment, most ratings in the basics-only alternative are in the middle of the scale.

ADVISORY COUNCILS

QUESTION TEN	Do advisory councils report to your school board? Yes ____ No ____

Advisory councils do report to school boards in about half of the districts of both board members and administrators. Unit district board members and secondary district administrators indicate the highest representation of advisory councils. Interviews reveal that elementary schools use parent-teacher organizations and associations in advisory capacities.

Advisory councils are essential in building partnerships with business and industry. Such partnerships are vital to fulfilling the schools' goal to provide education that is responsive to business and produces a program completer ready for the workplace and lifelong

learning. Successful partnerships with business also are vital to the survival of postsecondary institutions and, therefore, to the success of Tech Prep. Advisory councils not only provide input for programs and practical on-the-job applications for reading, writing, math, and specific job skills, but they also are school liaisons with parents, business, and industry and can be invaluable public relations agents for the schools. Most importantly, they keep educators informed of changes in pertinent technical fields.

The ICoVE partnerships study discloses the business and labor conviction that education in Illinois must make basic skills education its top priority, thereby acknowledging the advice and requests of business. Education must make a genuine commitment to improving basic skills in all educational programs, to being accountable for the improvement, and to teaching students how to apply these basic academic skills in solving real-world problems.

Public education needs to gain the trust of the private sector if public-private partnerships are to be invoked to improve vocational education. Implicit in this recommendation is the need to cooperate in working toward the common goal of preparing students for productive and satisfying employment while recognizing that disagreement on some issues will exist. The study urges clarifying the private sector role and making better use of its resources.

The ICoVE partnerships study also reveals that many businesses would be willing to provide substantial resources to vocational programs if they were convinced that the programs would use the resources effectively. Schools must create comprehensive strategies for using private-sector resources. Such strategies are crucial to ensuring successful public-private partnerships.

Through advisory councils, school boards and administrators can seek and heed the recommendations of industry concerning academic and technical skills taught in vocational programs. Clear dialogue must be established to provide feedback to industry on this issue. Although industry personnel know well the skills they seek in prospective employees, they often do not know what is involved in the learning process for those skills, nor do they necessarily know the optimum time, sequence, or methods for teaching them. Eliciting industry input for vocational education programs and reaching accord indeed requires the mutual trust of public education and the private sector.

Advisory councils which report to school boards can become involved in significant policy issues. Oklahoma's Graphic Arts Education Council exemplifies a business-education relationship that facilitates excellence in vocational programs and provides a better environment for the associated companies. It is considerably involved in policy issues. The council participates in program certification, instructor training, instruction, placement, and development of associate degree programs. Specifically, the council has begun a formal certification program for graphic arts programs in the state. Graphic arts instructors update their skills by working in the industry in areas in which they lack proficiency. The council augments graphics arts educational programs by providing instructors from industry to teach technical subjects not typically included in the curriculum and by inviting educators to attend industry-sponsored seminars free of charge. In addition to improving graduates' chances of entering the industry, the placement service established by the council makes it easier for firms to obtain information on the graduates. Finally, the council encourages postsecondary institutions to develop associate degree programs aimed at meeting specific industry hiring needs and is developing certification programs for them.

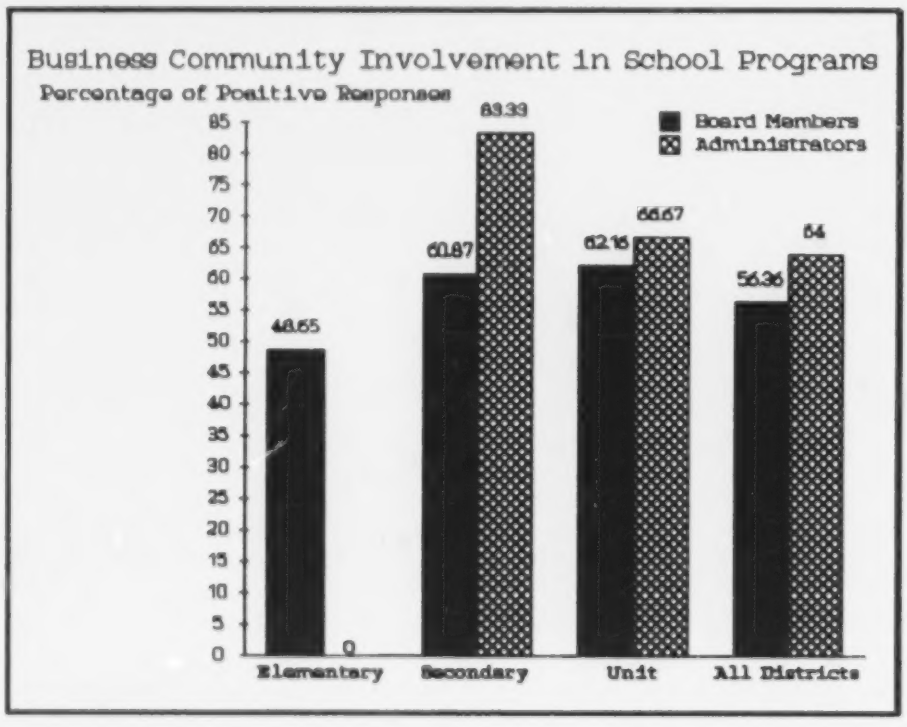
BUSINESS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

QUESTION ELEVEN	Are representatives of the business community actively involved with your school programs? Yes ____ No ____ To what extent? Elementary level; junior high; Secondary, academic; Secondary, vocational education; other _____ Scale: Low 1-2-3-4-5 High Don't know ____

A board member asserts, "We need commitment from our business community. We do have an activity scholarship program, but we need their human resources."

About 56% of the responding board members and 64% of the administrators report business community involvement in their school programs. The involvement is reported highest in secondary vocational education, followed in order by secondary academic programs, junior high school, and elementary school. Board member and administrator responses are very similar concerning the extent of business community involvement for specified educational levels. Involvement is perceived as moderate at the elementary and junior high levels and somewhat high for both academic and vocational education at the secondary level.

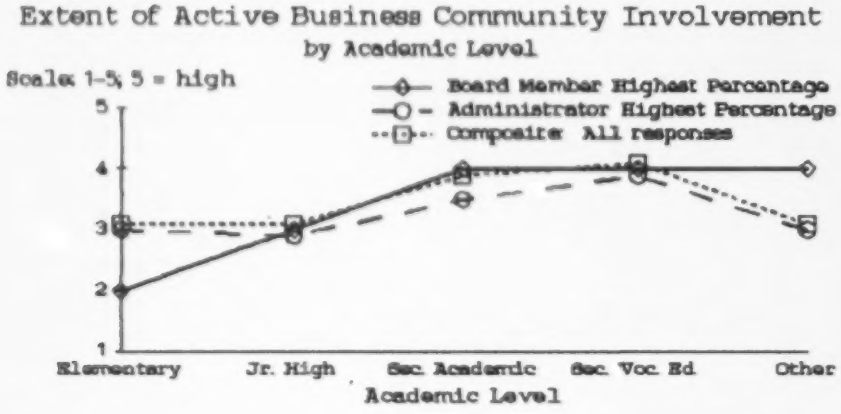
Within the district types, however, there is disparity of opinion. About half of the elementary district board members, but no elementary administrators, say that business community representatives are actively involved in their schools. Among secondary and unit district respondents, almost two-thirds of the board members say business community representatives are actively involved in their schools. Higher percentages of secondary and unit district administrators (83% and 67% respectively) report active business community involvement in their programs.

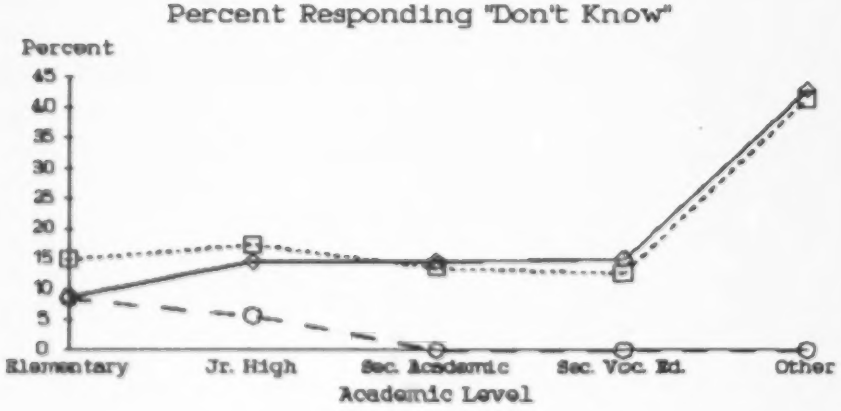


Perceptions of business involvement at the specified educational levels are almost identical for all but the elementary level. The overall rating is moderate involvement; about one-quarter of the respondents indicate moderate involvement. However, slightly more than a quarter of the board members estimate involvement as somewhat low, and a little less than half of the administrators believe that involvement is moderate.

Only a small portion of the reporting board members and administrators do not know the extent of business involvement at the specified levels. More than 90% of board members know the extent of business involvement at the elementary level. Slightly more than 85% report knowing the extent of business involvement in junior high, secondary academic, and secondary vocational education programs. Greater than 90% of the reporting administrators know the extent of business involvement in elementary and junior high programs, and virtually all administrators know the extent of involvement in the secondary programs.

An elementary district board member denotes a barrier to business community involvement in school districts in noncommercial areas. Commenting that the schools have limited contact with the business community at the elementary level, the representative conveyed also that the district has very little commercial development and must compete with other districts for business attention.





Similarly, the summary rating for business community involvement at the junior high level is moderate involvement. Board members and administrators concur at the mid range; all percentages are in the 30s.

Business involvement at the secondary level, for both academic and vocational education, is estimated overall as somewhat high. The greatest disparity is in the perception of involvement in secondary vocational education programs. The somewhat high rating is reported by about 29% of the board members and 40% of the administrators. However, the second highest number of board members indicate high involvement at the secondary level (21%), whereas the second highest number of administrators indicate moderate involvement (28%).

Business and industry involvement can result in greatly enhanced vocational education programs. Industry personnel can provide instruction on job search techniques, proper grooming and dress, work attitudes and habits, and employer expectations. Industry constituents can be instrumental in providing instruction and enrichment courses in applied academics. Industry-provided internships for both students and teachers strengthen skill, achievement, and performance. Peer match programs with local business and education leaders can facilitate the exchange of successful managerial practices and procedures for personnel, financial, and organizational problems, resulting in better business-education relations and cost savings. Incentive for excellence can be established through industry-supported award and recognition programs for outstanding t ching, student performance, and management practices.

IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

QUESTION TWELVE	How important is involving the business community in the following activities? Scale: Not very 1-2-3-4-5 Very Is the business community currently involved in these? Yes ____ No ____ Don't know ____ Identify reading standards; identify math standards; practice job interviews with students; talking with students about what they expect from employment; demonstrating trade skills; hands-on experiences in their place of business; helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of academic subject matter, math, English, science; speakers' bureau; team teaching; career days; advisory councils for vocational education programs; advisory councils for academic programs.

Respondents highly value business community involvement in the listed activities. The highest percentage of respondents rank business involvement important or very important (ratings 4 or 5) for every activity except "identifying reading standards," which is rated "moderately important" overall.

Business community involvement is deemed very important (rating 5) for five activities. The survey results reveal that the business community is perceived to be involved in three of those five: talking with students about what they expect from employment, hands-on experiences in their place of business, and career days. The other activities rated 5 in importance of business community involvement are these: helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of science subject matter and advisory councils for vocational education programs.

No business community involvement is perceived by respondents for any of the remaining activities, all but one of which is rated very important (rating 4).

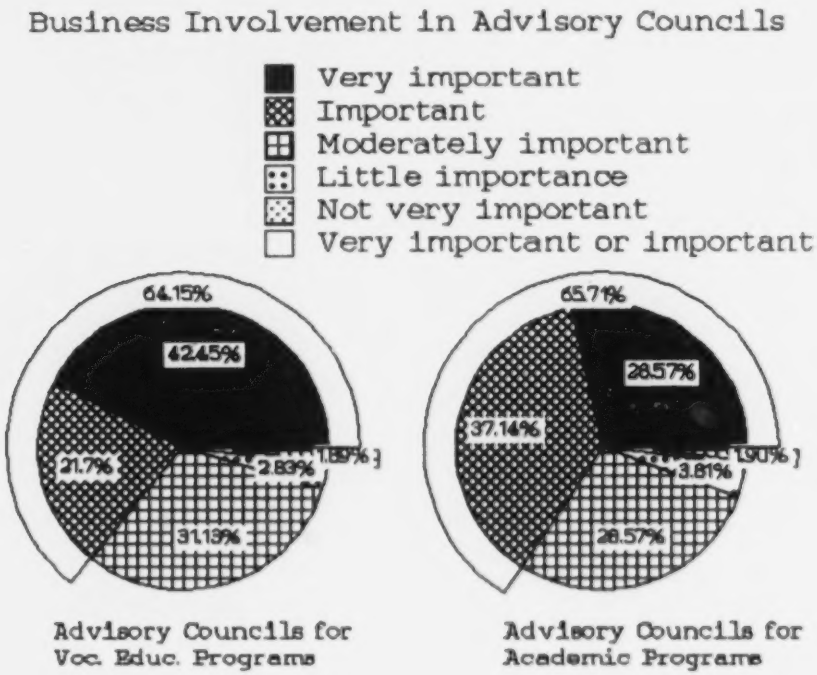
Board member and administrator perceptions of business community involvement are in accord with each other and with overall results in all but three areas: practice job interviews with students, speakers' bureau, and advisory councils for vocational education programs. Administrators feel that the business community is involved in all three, whereas the higher percentage of board members feel that the business community is not involved, which is the consensus of all respondents.

Importance of Involving the Business Community in School Programs

Activities with composite rating*	Percentage of all Respondents	Current business involvement perceived		
Rating 5		Board Members	Administrators	Overall
Talking with students about what they expect from employment	49.47%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hands-on experiences in their places of business	42.93%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career Days	43.09%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Advisory councils for vocational education programs	38.42%	No	Yes	No
Helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of science subject matter	34.09%	No	No	No
Rating 4				
Helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of academic subject matter	45.03%	No	No	No
Demonstrating trade skills	43.48%	No	No	No
Practice job interviews with students	43.09%	No	Yes	No
Helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of math subject matter	40.91%	No	No	No
Helping academic teachers develop "real work" applications of English subject matter	39.20%	No	No	No
Identify math standards	37.70%	No	No	No
Advisory Councils for academic programs	37.50%	No	No	No
Team teaching	36.31%	No	No	No
Speakers' bureau	34.09%	No	Yes	No
Rating 3				
Identify reading standards	32.24%	No	No	No

*Scale: 1-5; 5 = very important

Respondents' ratings of the importance of business community involvement in advisory councils for vocational education and academic programs are noteworthy. Half of the responding administrators feel that business community involvement in advisory councils for vocational education programs is important (rating 4); the second highest proportion, 24%, rate the involvement very important. Therefore, nearly 74% of the administrators deem business community involvement in advisory councils for vocational education programs either important or very important. In contrast, 42% of the board members give business involvement in advisory councils for vocational education programs a very important rating, followed by 22% who deem it important (rating 4). Fully 64% of the board members believe that business community involvement in advisory councils for vocational education programs is important or very important.



Surprisingly, both populations attach significant importance to the involvement of the business community in advisory councils for academic programs. Almost 66% of the board members and nearly 55% of the administrators feel that involving the business community in advisory councils for academic programs is either important or very important. Fewer than 2% of the board members and fewer than 5% of the administrators view this business involvement in advisory councils for academic programs as being of very little importance.

Clearly, sentiment favors eliciting commitment from the business community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO BOARD MEMBERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE
Become better informed about Tech Prep and encourage your secondary schools to participate in a Tech Prep planning project.	Tech prep is a major statewide reform initiative which is intended to improve the quality of vocational-technical education. Approximately $2.7 million of federal funds and a projected $3 million of state funds will be available annually to plan and implement Tech Prep. The State Board intends to involve as many school districts and community colleges as possible in Tech Prep. These planning grants are an excellent tool for creating partnerships between businesses and education, between secondary and postsecondary programs, and between academic and vocational educators. Partnerships with business already under way in local school district programs are ideal for coordination with Tech Prep. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is in the process of soliciting proposals for planning grants to enable secondary school systems and community colleges to implement Tech Prep programs. The State Board also has a number of informational brochures on this topic. Approximately 18 community colleges and secondary regional systems have already received planning grants.
Establish policies and practices that institutionalize and ensure the integration of academic and vocational-technical education.	Too many of our academic and vocational courses are taught in isolation. This often results in students not getting as much out of their educational experiences as they should. In some schools it also means that vocational students are unintentionally segregated and labeled. Integration of academics into vocational courses is a beginning, but much more needs to be done. Academic and vocational teachers need to plan their courses jointly to ensure that they reinforce each other's skill development. Also, schools need to be more innovative in terms of actually team teaching and merging classes into larger time period blocks. Integration of subject matter also implies a greater emphasis on applications of knowledge and skills. Application is just as important in academic classes as it is in vocational classes.

Ask administrators of the Education for Employment Regional Delivery System to report their activities on a regular basis.	ISBE regulates and approves all secondary vocational-technical programs through the regional delivery system (RDS). An RDS is a consortium of local school districts administered by a system's director and governed by a board of control of local administrators. An RDS determines to a large extent how state and federal vocational education funds will be spent within a given region. There are 61 RDSs in Illinois. ISBE processes almost all of its allocations and grants for secondary schools through the RDS. For example, if an LEA wants to receive a Tech Prep grant, it must go through the RDS to be funded. These and other important decisions are made through an RDS, so it is important to become aware of their services and activities. Given the large number of board members who did not know what an RDS is, a major opportunity is being missed to strengthen and support vocational programs.
Make provisions and acquire resources to support internships with the business community for secondary academic and vocational teachers, counselors, administrators, and other educators.	Many opportunities already exist to support internships with business. The VIP program, for example, affords vocational educators funds to participate. The Tech Prep grants will permit funds to enable academic and vocational educators to have similar experiences on a limited basis. Some school districts already use released time to encourage educators to learn more about the needs and expectations of the business community. A good way to ensure that this happens on a systematic basis would be to consider a policy that ensures some form of internship every year for a certain percent of educators. These internships need not be for extended periods of time. Benefit can be gained from almost any amount of time. Single-day sorties can be extremely valuable if they are planned properly, particularly for academic teachers. Vocational teachers and counselors, for example, may need considerably more time to fully experience all aspects of an industry.
Identify a "talent pool" in your community and encourage this talent to apply for provisional teaching certificates and other options for sharing their knowledge and skills with students.	The laws for teacher certification are quite explicit in terms of qualifications for teaching, and they should be respected. The purpose of this recommendation is to supplement the talent that already exists within the school--not to replace it. The community is a vast reservoir of talent for schools--most of which goes untapped. Many school districts throughout the country are beginning to avail themselves of this talent.

After thoroughly reviewing the current regulations, identify community members who could be "specialists in residence" and determine the conditions under which they could share their talents with students. The flexibility is greater, of course, when a certified teacher is working with them, but other options may be possible under certain conditions.

Get business community and educators' commitment to a common core of employability skills that should be taught by the entire school system.

Given the widespread support for providing instruction in employability skills or work readiness, it is particularly important to identify exactly what it is that everyone wants students to acquire. As easy as it might seem to agree on attitudes like punctuality and dependability, it is much more difficult to spell them out in terms of community standards. This consensus on a common core of employability skills is crucial for their realization as part of the school curriculum.

Develop a plan for systematically teaching and reinforcing employability skills.

After agreement is reached on the common core of employability skills, it is very important to set out a plan for the entire school to develop these skills. Merely making it every teacher's responsibility alone will not produce these outcomes. All teachers now believe they are teaching some if not all of these skills.

Therefore, concrete strategies must be identified by the entire school system. This would involve determining exactly when certain skills are to be introduced, reinforced, and mastered. Also, clear strategies must be identified for communicating the importance of these skills and values as part of the "culture of the school."

Develop or adopt a work readiness, employability skills assessment program.

An assessment program can have several very important benefits. It can communicate to students, parents, and the business community the serious intent of acquiring employability skills as part of the school's curriculum. It also will ensure that students leaving school will have acquired the employability skills they will need for the future.

The assessment program does not have to be--in fact, it probably should not be—a paper-and-pencil test. A number of assessment programs are already under development. ISBE will be examining assessment of employability skills as part of its performance standards initiatives. Nevertheless, the assessment program's most important feature is its validity with your community through their participation in its development or adoption.

Identify all secondary students who have not mastered basic academic skills and require an individual education plan that provides for their mastery of those skills.

One of the largest problems that face employers is an increasing number of workers who cannot handle tasks that require functional literacy and other basic academic skills. Therefore, it is particularly important that schools identify as early as possible those students who have not mastered these skills and develop a plan to ensure that they will master them before they leave or graduate from school.

Establish business advisory councils based on a partnership concept to provide substantive involvement of the private sector in educational planning and implementation.

Advisory councils have proven their worth in working with educators to establish high-quality vocational-technical programs. Increasingly, schools are establishing business-education councils to focus on the entire school's programs. Although it is important to recognize that business and education can work together, it does not mean that they have to do each other's job, nor does business have to dictate what the schools should do. The essence of a partnership is that people will work together for the common good.

Establish intensive, meaningful partnerships with business and industry.

The survey revealed strong support for involving the private sector in education. This can be accomplished by investing heavily in the following activities:

- Learn your partner's mission and how it interrelates with yours.
- Discover commonalities with your partner. These will be the basis for communication and working toward mutual goals.
- Ascertain the critical success factors for achieving your partner's mission.
- Do an environmental scan. Analyze the issues, trends, and forces that affect the critical success factors.
- Determine how the school can contribute to the critical success factors.
- Listen. Do not assume that what they want is what you have and just try to make it fit. Be willing to create a feature or program responsive to the determined need.

Students draw winning name for a T.V. L to R: Peter Johnson, ICoVE executive director; Sondra Brady, VICA officer; Jerry DeVore, PAS officer; Janel Wilson, VICA State President; Hartzel Black, ICoVE member.

Business leaders assert that an effective organization is a learning organization. Today's workforce is subject to lifelong learning in order to function successfully on the job, advance their careers, and further the success of the organization.

Increasingly, as the management level flattens, employees must be able to communicate across levels of workers and manage a culturally diverse

workforce. Finding a common ground and understanding each other's cultures is a prerequisite to achieving this objective.

Enormous potential exists in these arenas for educational entities. Providing graduates with employability skills for immediate entry into the workplace or for entry following further formal education is the foremost role for public education. Postsecondary institutions also can ensure their survival by finding a means of meeting their partners' training needs using the same principles of partnership building.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Consult ICoVE, U.S. Department of Labor, and American Society for Training and Development publications for new findings concerning workforce needs.

Consult the forthcoming research report from the Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT) on the field test of workplace readiness material conducted in October 1990.

Consult literature about the AIT/CORD (Center on Research and Development) joint venture with the Educational Testing Service to develop a set of tests to measure workplace readiness. Information on WORKLINK will be available in the fall of 1991 from Dr. George Elford, Director; Educational Testing Service; 1825 I Street, NW, Suite 475; Washington, DC 20006; (202) 659-0616

Consult literature about the American College Testing project with state education agencies and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges to develop employability skills measures. For information about Work Keys, contact Dr. Jerry W. Miller, Director; American College Testing; One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 340; Washington, DC 20036; (202) 223-2318.

Access the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Vocational Education Curriculum Materials (VECM), and Educational Testing Service (ETS) databases for updates of workplace skills evaluation materials.

Peter Johnson awards Cindy Eimer the T.V. she won for completing a questionnaire.

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDED READINGS AND VIDEOTAPE

RECOMMENDED READINGS

The following availability references are included for your convenience:

ICoVE Illinois Council on Vocational Education
100 Alzina Building
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62702-5186
(217) 782-2892

IVCC Illinois Vocational Curriculum Center
Sangamon State University, F-2
Springfield, IL 62794-9243
(217) 786-6375

BUILDING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS. ICoVE report. 1990.

Availability:
ICoVE
IVCC

TOWARD A WORLD-CLASS WORKFORCE. ICoVE business, industry, labor report. Forthcoming.

Availability:
ICoVE

ILLINOIS TECH PREP: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. Tech Prep brochure. Forthcoming.

Availability:
Illinois State Board of Education
Department of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001
(217) 782-4870

IMPROVING WORKPLACE SKILLS: LESSONS FROM JTPA. WHITE PAPER ON THE PROJECT OF THE STATES. 1989.

Availability:
Center for Remediation Design
1201 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 872-0776

Document summarizing the field test of core course materials for the Technology Basics Examinations. Forthcoming.

Availability:
ICoVE or
Agency for Instructional Technology
Box A
Bloomington, IN 47402
(800) 457-4509 or (812) 339-2203

Information on WORKLINK. Forthcoming in fall 1991.

Availability:
Dr. George Elford, Director
Educational Testing Service
1825 I Street, NW, Suite 475
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 659-0616

WORKPLACE READINESS: EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT. August 1989.

Availability:
Agency for Instructional Technology
Box A
Bloomington, IN 47402
(800) 457-4509 or (812) 339-2203

RECOMMENDED VIDEOTAPE

DOING BUSINESS WITH BUSINESS. Videotaped teleconference, The College Board. March 1990.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Carnevale, Anthony P., and others. ***TRAINING IN AMERICA: THE ORGANIZATION AND STRATEGIC ROLE OF TRAINING.*** ASTD Best Practices Series: Training for a Changing Workforce. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Carnevale, Anthony P., and others. ***WORKPLACE BASICS: THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT.*** ASTD Best Practices Series: Training for a Changing Workforce. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Gold, Gerard G., and others. ***INDUSTRY-EDUCATION-LABOR COLLABORATION: POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN PERSPECTIVE.*** Washington, DC: Center for Education and Work, National Institute for Work and Learning, 1982.

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Sticht, T. G., and Mikulecky, Larry. ***JOB-RELATED BASIC SKILLS: CASES AND CONCLUSIONS.*** Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1984.

Turner, Marsha. ***CAREER DEVELOPMENT/EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS: PARTNERSHIPS & PROGRAMS.*** Tallahassee, FL: Access, The Education Clearinghouse for Economic Development, Florida Department of Education, 1989.

Warmbrod, Catharine P., and others. ***BUSINESS-INDUSTRY-LABOR INPUTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.*** Leadership Training Series No. 59. Columbus: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, 1980, 2nd edition.

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11 East Adams, Suite 1008
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